

in the provisions of title VI, subtitle A of this bill, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 9 of rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I do not believe that the provisions of title VII of the Advancing America's Priorities Act, S. 3297, constitute a "congressionally directed spending item," as defined by Public Law 110-81, but out of an abundance of caution I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has a pecuniary interest in the provisions of title VII of S. 3297, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 9 of Rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to thank the majority leader, Senator REID, for including in S. 3297, the Advancing America's Priorities Act, an important initiative to support the horticulture operations of the Smithsonian Institution. Without this needed support, the Smithsonian Institution would not be able to maintain or continue the same level of horticulture services it currently provides.

I additionally want to thank Senator FEINSTEIN, chair of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, for her support of this important initiative. I would also like to note the support for this effort of Senators LEAHY and COCHRAN and thank them for their work to preserve the Smithsonian's many valuable contributions.

I do not believe that the provisions of title VII of S. 3297 constitute a "congressionally directed spending item," but out of an abundance of caution I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has a pecuniary interest in the provisions of title VII of S. 3297, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 9 of rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to support this important and needed initiative to support the horticulture operations of the Smithsonian Institution.

#### UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— S. 294

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Chair lay before the Senate a message from the House on S. 294, the Passenger Rail Investment Improvement Act; further, that the Senate disagree to the House amendment, agree to the request for a conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and the Chair be authorized to authorize conferees on the part of the Senate with a ratio 4 to 3.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. COBURN. I object.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there are a number of individuals who want to speak. I ask consent that the following be the order of the Chair: that Senator BROWN be recognized for 10 minutes, Senator CANTWELL for 1 minute—Senators BROWN and CANTWELL for 1 minute and Senator ENZI for 1 minute. How many minutes is that?

Where I made my mistake is Senator CANTWELL needs 4 minutes. So Senator BROWN, 10 minutes; Senator CANTWELL, 4 minutes; Senator ENZI, 1 minute; Senator CARPER, 1 minute; and then the Senator from Alaska would be given 30 minutes to distribute however she feels appropriate. This is all as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, would the Presiding Officer let me know when I have 1 minute left, please?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will be notified.

#### LIHEAP

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, with gas prices soaring, the effects are being felt all across my State of Ohio. In the last year and a half, I have held 110 roundtables, talking to people in 75 of Ohio's 88 counties, listening to what they are telling me about gas prices and about other challenges: food prices, the cost of energy to heat their homes—all of those. School districts in Appalachia are contemplating going to 4-day school weeks just to cut down on the amount of gas the buses will use. The bicycle police academy in Columbus is being forced to turn applicants away, as community after community is looking to put police on bicycles in order to keep fuel costs down. Police and fire departments across Ohio are struggling to keep community services going while facing crippling gas prices. Our truckers, our farmers, and our businesses are struggling and are often forced to raise the prices of their goods and services.

This price increase is devastating to our poorest populations, who, come winter, will be facing a double whammy: trying to pay for gasoline to get to work and for either natural gas or heating oil to heat their homes. We are deep into this energy crisis, and while Americans are currently most affected at the pump, we cannot forget that winter is around the corner. Fuel prices are still on the rise. We have witnessed a nearly 40 percent rise in heating oil already this year. That means Americans are going to need all the relief they can get this winter.

When pocketbooks are drained to pay heating bills, families are forced too often to make very difficult decisions. It is money families can use to put food on the table, pay for transportation, buy winter coats or other necessities

for their children. That is why we have LIHEAP, which we just voted on and which, on basically a party-line vote, Republicans oppose. The LIHEAP program is geared toward preventing families from facing this heat-or-eat dilemma. But despite its success, current funding levels do not meet its demands. That is why LIHEAP is so crucial. It would assist the elderly, assist moderately low-income families, and other low-income individuals who already experience financial strain as their wages remain stagnant but they have higher gas prices to get to work, higher food prices, and now, when winter comes, higher prices to heat their homes. The lack of funds to invest in solutions with upfront costs and long-term savings keeps too many low-income individuals in poverty.

An increase in LIHEAP funding would also increase the Weatherization Assistance Program, which prevents families from wasting energy while also providing good-paying jobs.

In Marietta, a few weeks ago, I met a crew of four young men who were learning a skill and assisting the elderly. They were paid \$12, \$13 an hour, fixing up homes, weatherizing them, cutting energy bills for the elderly, for low-income elderly residents of Washington County. They were saving on energy for all of us as energy prices keep going up, and they were learning this trade and making a difference for all of us.

Given current energy strains and current financial strains Americans have already experienced, the time for Congress to act on LIHEAP is now, before Americans get left out in the cold.

#### HOUSING

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader for bringing the housing bill to the Senate today. It was met in the past by a filibuster, but the good work of Chairman DODD and Ranking Member SHELBY and the majority leader means we finally have housing legislation that will matter to Ohioans and matter to Americans. In Ohio's Morgan County, for instance, a small rural county in southeast Ohio, foreclosures were up 60 percent over last year, and the year, obviously, is only half over. More than 200 families in my State lose their homes every day.

This housing legislation will make a difference in helping people stay in their homes. It will help communities deal with the costs they bear in fixing up abandoned homes, sometimes knocking down those homes because homes that are blighted homes in any community cause the value of homes in the neighborhood owned by people who are paying and keeping up, keeping their houses looking good and paying their mortgages—their homes decline in value because of the foreclosures in their neighborhoods.

This legislation, in addition to all the other things it does, provides help